"Notes for a sketch of Ross Dowson" by Arnie Mintz

Foreword by the Editor: *this is a biographical sketch of Ross Dowson by an ex-member of the LSA, centering on Ross's early life and career as a revolutionist. Arnie had recently returned to Canada bearing the scars of a picket-line militant in Britain. By then he had evolved to the extreme left of the Trotskyist movement. Isolated and ill, he died in Toronto in the early 1990s with only a few of his ex-comrades attempting to support him.*

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Introduction

Many have met Ross. This is because he is always available. This book is about his youth. As best as possible this book tries to capture Ross's thinking at the time before and during WWII.

Ross was consulted in producing this small book. It can be appreciated that memory of events fifty years ago is often only general or changed by time. Events that seem important at the time diminish later. Events not prominent at the time become significant. So chance is involved. Sometimes recollections may be mixed with similar incidents years later. Available archive material has also been used.

This book will shed light on the dictatorship of the proletariat -- the workers tell the truth, the bosses lie -- always. To exploit human beings for capitalist profit, that is the definition of dishonesty.

Ross became a communist at an early age. All too often the revolutionary content of events is buried under a mountain of bourgeois filth. Here is an attempt to unearth it. Too much has remained buried. Still the reader will agree that Ross's memories

are rich and vivid.

Arnie Mintz Toronto Oct. 27/88

CHAPTER ONE HIGH SCHOOL (1934-1938)

Ross was born in 1917. His father was a unionized printer, who as a craftsman became a foreman at Hunter Rose Eaton's Catalogue, and for a period during the Toronto printers' strike went to work on the US - Chicago Sears Roebuck (catalogue). (From this elite) element of the working class, his father was self-educated, a militant atheist and a collector of books on printing layout and color work. His collection included books on craft printing and also some first editions of such authors as Oscar Wilde. Some of these books (were the first) to stir Ross's idealism. Early on Ross acquired the smell of (printers') ink, because his father had printing presses and type font racks stored in the basement in his house on Grenadier Road, and did the odd (printing) job as a favor for friends.

His mother came from a moderately well off family of a school principal. When her father died she used part of her inheritance to put herself and her younger sister through an early course so they could sustain themselves as stenographers.

Ross's father (fostered) idealism in Ross's upbringing. His mother, (...) not an atheist as was his father, pushed him into attending the Sunday school at both High Park and at the United Church located at Eglinton and Guestville, into which he carried his atheism. He disturbed the teachers because he would speak up against what they said and get into arguments with them. This was embarrassing to have a young kid saying "no." They were pleased when he didn't come. They were on his side because they didn't want him there and he didn't want to be there. Eventually they gave up on him at 10 or 11 and his mother gave up on his religious training.

Ross had three brothers and three sisters. By 1934 one brother, Murray, older by two years, had already joined the Trotskyist "Workers Party" while a student at York Memorial Collegiate. Murray and Ross had been fighting for years. After all what could Murray know? Ross wanted to go around where Murray was, but Murray didn't want him.

So in early 1934 ((late 1934 or early 1935)) Ross joined (or) Murray recruited him anyway. At 17 years of age and (while) a student at York Memorial, Ross joined the Workers Party. Ross was inspired by the study classes on scientific socialism held by

the Mount Dennis Spartacus Club in the first months of 1934 (1935?) The classes explained how the workers could get rid of capitalism and how the young Ross could help. (He) was ready willing and able to work for communism. And work he did.

Ross, the youngest member of the York Township Workers Party Branch, listened, observed and helped in elections. He collected money for the Spanish revolutionists who were being murdered by the Stalinists, stood on picket lines such as Eaton's garment factory strikers and (the) Oshawa autoworker strikers, sold The *Vanguard* and assisted at open-air meetings at Earlscourt Park and at the corner of Weston Road and Eglinton. ((At one corner meeting he was forced to do the speaking. "Go on Ross, you can do it," said Sylvia *Jourard.*) He learned to run the duplicator, (joined) in May Day marches and unemployed demonstrations, and attended Workers Party functions.

In January 1935 the Workers Party held an important public meeting of 700 at the Labor Temple on Church Street. Ross distributed leaflets for the meeting and took advantage of the rally to meet Spector who was explaining the Kirov assassinations in the Soviet Union. The assassination opened up trials which the next year led to Stalin's Frame-up trials of Lenin's entire General Staff as agents of imperialism.

Spector, the expelled editor of the Communist Party newspaper, had come up from New York where he was editor of the *New International* magazine. Spector's contribution to the WP was missed (by the organization) in Toronto. He made connections, was a brilliant orator: colorful, sophisticated. He was an able person who functioned in a limited movement although it was sometimes difficult with some of the youth who did not respect him. Spector was one of those responsible for launching the York Township Branch and it's unemployed work. Spector had continuing relations with individual branch members.

(The Workers Party had a wide range of activities, including (selling) the Vanguard and a Ukrainian paper. Noteworthy of its seriousness was its sport, including participating in a baseball league.)

But the WP was very isolated. It had practically no strength in the trade unions. It's connection with the Trade Unions was largely limited to the Jewish needle trade workers. The WP did what it could. It was able to sell the Vanguard at factories through personal contact. At Canada Packers where Ross worked during the summer, along with another WP member, he tried to organize a union but was unsuccessful. The shifts were very tough, 7-7 on nights, but the money was good for a young kid making a full wage.

Returning to school, a Trotskyist group was organized at York Memorial. At this high school the teachers sympathized with the working class and a couple of teachers were good enough to hold classes after school which encouraged an interest in international affairs. One series held by the Spartacist (group) in private homes in November 1935, given by a postal worker leader explain(ed) the history of Canadian wealth. Other students were invited to join in the discussion circle which sometimes had up to 15 in attendance at person's homes.

The centre of the activities of the York Township Branch was the unemployed movement. Even as a student Ross was detailed to work with unemployed youth. Most of the branch was unemployed, plus some skilled workers and some students. With about 15 members the branch vied with the larger Communist Party for leadership of the unemployed movement.

There was a vibrant unemployed movement and York Township was its strong centre. The WP played a full part in it. One effective action was to take homelessness directly into their own hands and take over Coronation Park at Keele and Eglinton. They built burrows in the ground to live (in) with a shack overhead for a roof. The action was spearheaded by single unemployed who received no welfare. Single unemployed got no relief or welfare but were expected to share the family's relief cheque. (This) action included members of both the WP and the CP. Ross went over regularly to give support. The burrows were able to stay in use for two months before the police moved in to break it up. (On one occasion in November 1935, the unemployed successfully seized demonstrated at the the York Township offices and held the Reeve in his office prisoner for a period. Confrontation works. Also there was a strike of unemployed relief workers. The council withdrew its cuts, trying to buy time.)

Unemployed workers were humiliated with vouchers so they could only get clothes at certain stores, hence a uniform for outcasts. But at one clothes giveaway, one of the unemployed guys grabbed a tuxedo and then wore it on garbage detail. The big issue was **cash relief**, not vouchers.

There were endless confrontations with the police who sought to wear down the activists. The unemployed were evicted from their homes. Sometimes there were mass anti-eviction actions of up to 450 persons. Ross would be amongst the group who would then take the furniture back in. The Bailiffs would take the furniture out, then the activists would take it back in.

Inspired by the B.C. Relief Camp strikes in 1935 and 1936, there were (further) strikes in Toronto of 2,000 relief workers

centered in York Township, and the Workers Party supported the picketing. In June 1936 two CP unemployed leaders were amongst those arrested in midnight raids to try to break the strikes. Ross participated in the July 1935 march from York Township to Queen's Park. The unemployed wanted regular jobs and not to have to work for relief and especially not (have to work for relief and specially not garbage work.)

Ross actively participated in the unemployed youth meetings at Silverthorne Hall. As one of seven children, Ross had a stripped down diet of barley soup, beans, bread and jam. After the unemployed youth meetings Ross and sometimes a few contacts would adjourn to the home of an unemployed friend who lived across the road for discussions and feast on baked goods which were lacking on his own family's table. The unemployed WP member who Ross went to the meetings with, lived across the road from the hall and they would go back afterwards for some sweets which were always on hand.

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In the spring of 1936, mass expulsions took place from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Moscow Trials were on. They marked a war against Trotskyism everywhere. A whole new era of thuggery and assault was opening up. In Canada, Trotskyist paper salesmen were chased away by goon squads and sometimes beaten up. It was a new atmosphere of viciousness which had legitimatized the killing of Trotskyists. Trotskyists were labeled by the CPers as agents of Hitler and the Mikado. There was a campaign against the Workers Party to isolate it. The WP was able to function only with increased difficulty.

At the same time, Jack Macdonald, the expelled General Secretary of the CP, and leading figure of the WP, was ill and tired. You could see it in his face. He would die in 1941 at 53 years of age. Macdonald, who spoke with a noticeable Scottish accent, was highly respected in workers' circles. He exuded confidence to workers. He was a proletarian spokesman with a long tradition in the working class. The young Ross would never really get to know him.

(In June 1936 Ross completed senior matriculation. He passed a full program of Upper School Exams, finished high school and went to work.)

After finishing school, Ross worked at various jobs. For a while for instance he was a shipper. Also he kept busy collecting money for revolutionists in Spain. He discussed political differences with a small anarchist group when it attended WP meetings. Aid to Spain was a big issue. The Stalinists wanted to

send beans. Ross wanted to send guns.

(Around this time he attended a meeting of Bukharin's supporters held at Cumberland Hall near Bloor and Yonge. Lovestone, who became a fink in the American Federation of Labor, was the speaker. One time a top leader of the American CP he was speaking on the Moscow Trials. Ross was extremely nervous. This was an internationally known speaker and he had never done this kind of thing before. Nobody else exposed Lovestone so Ross got up to defend Trotsky.)

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Around this time some Canadian fascists attempted to hold a meeting at Weston Road and Eglinton. Ross went with about ten WP comrades to break up the meeting. They got up in the meeting to disrupt it and were thrown out.

In 1935 and 1936 the WP began to discuss entry into the CCF. (The French Trotskyists had previously undertaken the highly controversial tactic of entry into the Socialist Party of France. The American Trotskyists had entered the SP in June 1936 and this affected the Canadian WP which hitherto had been established as branches of the Communist League of America.

(Ross attended downtown branch meetings on Sundays. He met a few of the younger members. It was at these meetings that the arguments were held over entry. In order for the York Township members to get home they would have to break up the meetings. Ross took the Weston Road streetcar to the Northlands loop. After 12:30 there was no streetcar transfer at the loop which marked the city limits, so he used to walk home from the loop.)

Forays were made to scout and make connections in the CCF and CCF Youth. Ross was asked to record some of his experiences so he went in 1936 to build from scratch a CCYM group in York Township. He made progress and recruited some people. It was hard unpleasant work for a revolutionist. (The whole atmosphere was stifling. It was full of bureaucratic maneuvering and blatant careerism. It was unlike the WP which was alive with dynamic self-sacrifice and stimulating persons.) Some members of the WP were scandalized by what he was trying to do. Ross wanted to see how the clock ticked; what the possibilities were. He found it rather difficult, where people treated him as a spy.

The CCYM youth leadership killed the club. Better to have no club than have Ross. The executive withheld a club charter unless Ross was expelled. He was. After Ross appeared at the Provincial Executive, one of the executive, Fred Dowling, subsequently the leader of the Canadian Packinghouse Workers'

Union, commented bizarrely, “I hope you won't be discouraged and will continue to be active for socialism”. Like Dowling, other CCYM leaders became part of the trade union officialdom with the rise of the CIO-CLC.

Ross concluded that the CCF-CCYM provided no opening for revolutionists, and was repulsed by the experience. *(Note by A.M. written in margin: "I wasn't repulsed by my experience in our class.")* (It was rife with manipulation; a swamp. He concluded that the CCYM provided no openings for revolutionists. Like any other experience Ross knew that as a Bolshevik he had to make the most of whatever experience he was fortunate enough to go through.)

He wrote a document for the WP discussion "Why I oppose entry." (He wrote a document/report of experiences in the CCYM for the WP discussions. Spartacus Youth decided to enter the CCYM in June on a vote of 17 for, 15 against. Work was not really begun until September. The morale of the organization on the whole was very poor. When the question of working towards a split from the CCYM was brought up and voted upon, the vote was 10 for, 8 against. Many of those who are in the CCYM had been attending CCYM meetings very irregularly.)

The Workers Party had several months of bitter internal friction over the entry. This led to a convention. Ross was one of the delegates. The entry was supported by Macdonald. The convention voted by 35 to 20 to enter the CCF. In January 1937 the Vanguard ceased to appear. In May 1937 entry as individuals was agreed to by the CCF brass and the WP was dissolved. The bitterness of the dispute carried on after the entry. The minority did not take part in the new executive. The minority distributed international literature. There were really two groups now. Macdonald became completely inactive. The entry had a large component of defeatism. The entry was premised on crystallizing a left wing (within the CCF) but none such existed. It was false premises. The WP was having a hard time. The entry ran concurrent with the disintegration of the Workers Party. It was a false orientation.

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In 1937 Ross continued to go to WP educational meetings when they occurred. Ross got some welcome sleep. He played tennis. He had enough gall to challenge for the Ontario championships and lasted three rounds. In the Spring of 1937 Ross and some comrades jumped into a car to go to the Oshawa autoworkers picket line. (The strike established industrial unionism, the CIO in factories in Canada. The government sent in mounted police, "Hepburn's Hussars", to try to break the strike

and vowed it would stop the CIO at the border, but the strike was solid.)

(In 1937, Ross kept in contact. He went to educational meetings when they would occur. Around this time he helped to organize the John Reed Club at the Workmen's Circle. He was the only "goy" in the circle.)

But the collapse of the downtown WP was disastrous. The HQ had been at 320 Spadina. In order to get into the HQ you had to go through a part of the Ukrainian Trotskyist's print shop where the comps *(compositors - ed.)* handset the type. There were shelves of type fonts. The "Vanguard" and the Ukrainian paper were put out together there - -composed but not printed.) When a comrade went down in 1937 he found everything was going into the furnace. Ross, already expelled from the CCF, was in limbo. So were a number of (other members of) the WP, particularly Spartacus Youth leaders, excluded from the CCF.

At Christmas 1937-38, Ross went to Chicago to attend the American Trotskyist's convention on the occasion of their split from the SP and the founding of the SWP. A Canadian Commission was held designed to bring about the unification and reconstitution of the movement in Canada. The Commission, at which Ross, (as) one of the representatives of the minority, called for "the fusion of the majority comrades with the active nucleus of the minority." Canadian comrades should concentrate their main efforts on work within the CCF with a view to climaxing entry by a complete programmatic and political fight at or around the fall national convention of the CCF."

There was a continuing dispute throughout 1938. More meetings, more submissions. The majority showed resistance to leaving the CCF and (to) a fusion with the minority, the two issues being closely connected. The Chicago decisions were still (only) on paper.

Ross was still a kid. He didn't know what was going on, was inexperienced, and wanted to see unity. The Commission was composed of competent comrades, more competent than he. Ross signed the document to resolve to attempt to work together. As loyal members, the anti-entry group committed itself to regroup. The minority was in limbo, though it got together informally sometimes.

In April 1938, the ex-WP began to publish a left-wing CCF bulletin. During the summer Ross was at an anti-fascist demo at Massey Hall. There were arrests and a street fight. Police broke up the counter-demonstration. Ross had just completed high school, and was bound for work.

CHAPTER TWO -- WORK (1938-)

After finishing school and after working part-time as a shipper at Firstbrooke Boxes, Ross landed a job as an office worker at Kodak.

In September, the Fourth International founding conference held a Canadian Commission urging "any delay in break(ing) with the bureaucracy of the CCF is exceedingly harmful. (An) end to (the) unprofitable existence in (the) CCF."

Meanwhile, Ross's father had retired. He decided he wasn't going to work any more. He said if he had $50 or whatever (deleted by RD) he could get a place downtown. So Ross gave him the money. His father was causing a crisis in the family by not working. Ross continued to see his father (in order to) see he ate regularly.

So Ross is working at Kodak. He is in the active nucleus of the minority and helping to support the family of eight. Only two were working: he and a sister. He knew, everybody knew, the war is coming. So when the war is coming, you know there is going to be an expansion of industry (a massive explosion of industrial production of war materiel.)

After the entry the movement dissolved. It revived under a scholar (some intellectuals) from University (Earl Birney?) These types tried to give leadership to the CCF entry. The Trotskyist movement is in decay and going down. The leadership is well-meaning petty-bourgeois, (and) incompetent, but they are the leadership. The anti-entry forces like Ross tended to (stay) away for a while, though Ross participated in a mass anti-fascist demo on Bloor Street at Bathurst. A lot of different groups were involved. The street was jammed and the meeting blocked.

Finally in December 1938 the Trotskyists were expelled from the CCF and it was decided to launch the Socialist Workers League. A printed paper was put out. It was difficult to sell subscriptions. The paper attacked the war, opposing the Stalinists and largely oriented to recruiting from the crisis-ridden CP as war loomed, though Ross was skeptical about this orientation. Ross had just come through a fight over their CCF orientation. He was only beginning to mature, at 21 years of age. a bad case of delayed development, eh! ((He was maturing, at 21 years of age.))

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1939 the SWL was a central part of the (leadership) of another strike of 2,000 unemployed relief

workers centering in York Township. They demanded restoration of relief cuts, retention of single unemployed relief and work at trade union wages.

In the summer of 1939 the SWL attempted to work with the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, the Canadian associates of B.J. Field, much stronger in Canada than in the US, (with) a common May Day meeting and an anti-fascist demo. The LRWP was started in 1934 on the basis of personal gripes in the WP. It collapsed ((disappeared)) at the onset of WW II. But for a while it was more active and more dynamic. Unlike the WP the LRWP had some able women members. The LRWP in Toronto held street corner meetings and had a HQ in downtown Toronto. They were very active. They had young people.

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The Stalin/Hitler Pact in August 1939 opened the war. It had a staggering impact amongst Jewish workers in the needle trades. With the beginning of WW II printers wouldn't handle the paper so it came out clandestinely.

The police were promoting persons to phone in reporting anybody who said anything of a disloyal nature. The press reported that the police picked up (anyone) for saying 'to hell with the Queen,' or King. With the outbreak of the war in September 1939 the leadership of the SWL decided to organize a public meeting with the main speaker an English socialist -- Frank Watson on the street corner of Brunswick and College on opposition to the war.

Watson was arrested at the meeting with about 60 passersby who had gathered in attendance. Watson was jailed for speaking out against the war. He was the first person to be prosecuted under the defense of Canada regulations, which when he came before the court, he learned were not yet even published. Ross wasn't at the meeting he didn't know about it until reading the daily press. Watson had just come to Toronto from England - a vigorous anti-fascist who had been helping bring radicals out of Germany to England, and was a militant opponent of WW II.

It would appear that the SWL leadership thought that this protest would spark broader protests against the war, but it was not to be. Ross himself was asked to contact the anarchist Emma Goldman but she was ill. She demurred -- and died in Toronto shortly after. Ross thought that the whole project was ill-advised and would not, could not go anywhere, let alone spark a real movement. Pacifist CCF leader Woodsworth made known his personal opposition to the war, turned over the leadership to M.J. Coldwell who in the name of the CCF

parliamentary caucus, endorsed the war, and the gravely ill Woodsworth was pushed aside.

Ross objected to the martyr set-up.Watson was sentenced to three months in jail and another 3 months or a $300 fine. Ross visited Watson in the Don Jail on Gerrard St. He took him some books and (organized) a modest campaign to pay off the fine and get Watson out until the trial. The SWL was banned : declared illegal by the Lieutenant- Governor and was forced underground but a defence committee was launched, gained some support in some union locals and gave publicity to the Watson case amid intensified censorship.

Clandestine SWL activity continued. The intellectuals deserted the organization leaving a handful of ranks, including Ross, to fend for themselves. Ross took his direction from Trotsky, whose murder in Mexico by Stalin in (1940), staggered Ross. The group tried to circulate its newspaper by circulating it amongst acquaintances and such means as inserting into library books, and they went up tall buildings like the ones between stores at Queen and Yonge, dropping papers on the crowd in the streets below. Ross became fully involved in the publication of this very modest paper. Writing for the paper he began to really understand the Trotskyist program for the first time. The paper was largely published to hold the group together. Ross assumed the responsibility of editing it shortly before it folded up (after a couple of issues in June 1942) .There were problems obtaining paper. Progressively it became very vague. They (had to decide) what to do.

In the summer of 1941 the SWL decided to encourage its handful of members and sympathizers to get jobs in basic industry. Ross finished up at Kodak, took a course on machine shop work sponsored by the government in order to become an effective trade union member. But found that he couldn't get a job in any in any of the big unionized shops without presenting army rejection or discharge papers. Ross got a job at one of the many small shops that sprang up to take army contracts as a supposed tool and die maker. In November 1941 Ross attended the funeral of Macdonald. There was a large crowd present.

In 1941 it was decided that he should make a trip across Canada to pull the connections together, to renew the broken connections. So Ross went West, hitch-hiking. As there was no Trans-Canada highway then across Northern Ontario, he hitch-hiked to Sault-Ste Marie and from there took a boat across Lake Superior to Port Arthur/Fort William (Thunder Bay) .

His first destination was Saskatchewan where there had been connections. There's no traffic on the Prairie roads. If you

don't take the first thing to come along, you don't get there. He would not see anybody for hours. His first stop was Wiseton, Saskatchewan where he met a comrade who had homesteaded there. It is in the middle of the Prairies. Then he went on to Saskatoon (where he met) remarkable people but largely isolated and older veterans of previous class battles. One guy was waiting for word from Toronto for the insurrection. He had guns in the barn.

Then on to Lloydminster on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border, where he arrived at the height of a torrential rain storm that blocked Ross from reaching his objective -- Steanstown -- the roads had been washed out, and would not be re-opened for several days, possibly for a week or more. He later learned that there were contacts in Lloydminster itself, but he was unable to locate them on that trip. ... Ross had never been out West before. He had no idea of the vastness, its sparsely populated, undeveloped character. There were whole gaps where he had no leads. He was lonely, in the middle of WW II's tumultuous events.

But then he would get to a place where he had an address and the doors would open to him. At Moon Lake, not far from Edmonton in Alberta he contacted a sophisticated worker militant, a miner who had been active in the organizing of the Alberta coal miners' struggles and in the Communist Party from which he had broken to support Trotsky and the Left Opposition. At that time he was farming-homesteading at Christina Lake in B.C. (where) he contacted a woman and her husband who had been a leading activist in the CP. She had been a nurse and was inspired to hear of the efforts to build a new Trotskyist movement."

Ross made it to a couple of other places on the Prairies. (Ross went to Medicine Hat to see an uncle who gave him a meal and a few dollars. He went through the Rocky Mountains at Fernie. He went on to Notch Hill, on Lake Shuswap. This comrade, a Swede, had built his own wooden house on the lakeshore. He and his wife who taught in the local one-room school house had a large family and were highly respected and widely known as socialists through the community. Everyone in the family played a musical instrument... They farmed a clearing up on the hills overlooking the lake. They had long been identified with the Socialist Party of Canada which had been a key component of the left in the B.C. CCF. They organized a meeting for Ross as they had often done for leading CCFers Woodsworth and Angus MacInnis. Some 20 to 25 persons jammed the benches in the school house to hear Dowson explain the SWL's opposition to the war and project the socialist revolution which would result from it.

There was a scattering of contacts. In one area he had to

go over mountain ranges to get to the BC Coast. Up and down, then up and down again -- dangerous as hell. In another (area) he got a ride from a guy stewed to the gills.
There were bears and wildlife about. Ross never thought he'd make it.

Suddenly he came onto a main street of a community with false fronts like in a Western movie. It seemed the town was deserted -- the local mines worked out. But there were little kids running around. These were the Japanese who'd been ripped out of B.C. The women and children separated from their husbands were here in Greenwood, B.C. We went through this remarkable sight of government callousness in internment.

((At Christina Lake in B.C. he contacted a woman and her husband who had been a leading activist in the CP. She was a real house of fire, a plebian, a nurse. She was inspired by the efforts to rebuild the Trotskyist movement.))

So Ross made it to Vancouver. He headed straight to meet Paddy Stanton who ran a newsstand on a central street corner known to everyone as carrying the dailies, but for special customers, the American socialist periodicals "The Militant" and the "Fourth International" and assorted pamphlets by Leon Trotsky.>> ((Stanton was known to everybody. He went to the Stanley Park CCF club -- all the radicals went there. Ross spoke at a couple the Forums.) The Vancouver Trotskyists had never left the CCF. They had to be pulled out of the CCF.
They had become left-wing CCFers. ((It was operating as a Marxist group in the CCF. The CCF discussions were unsatisfactory -- (The CCF was affecting the SWL.)

The working class of Canada and in fact the leadership of the Canadian Congress of Labour rejected the Communist Party's efforts to commit them to a no-strike pledge for the duration of the war. Paddy Stanton played a key role in opposing any no- strike pledge. Delegate Stanton was given the go-ahead by the chair of the Quebec City convention to make a key speech in opposition to the (no-) strike pledge during which he heaped scorn
(on) the CP for betraying Lenin. Stanton praised Lenin who the CP claims to emulate, for advocating and carrying out the greatest general strike in history, in the midst of a war -- the Russian Revolution.

The CCF left was also known by insiders as the White Lunch gang. These were working-class cafeterias where radicals often congregated to meet one another and have a coffee. Paddy had been a Wobbly ((always a mark of real distinction)) . Ross spent a month in Vancouver working and talking to the group. A branch meeting was held and correspondence was set up and

relations reestablished.

Ross hitch-hiked back to Toronto. He attended the funeral of Jack Macdonald. There was a large crowd present. In the summer of 1942 Ross enlisted in the army.

CHAPTER 3 ((Chapter Four)) **-- ARMY**

OMISSIONS FROM THE MINTZ PUBLISHED TEXT:

(A) Page 33, 2nd para: "While on leaves he participated in Toronto SWL meetings, although the paper had ceased to appear in June 1942."

(B) Page 38, 4th para: "In the meantime the SWL was pulling its modest forces together. They issued and distributed an effective leaflet hailing May Day 1944."

(C) Page 39, 5th para: "Unlike the Canadian Trotskyists who were driven underground, the SWP was not only functioning, like its British co-thinkers, quite openly, but following the celebrated trial of its leadership in Minneapolis for their opposition to the war, winning widening support."

(D) Page 41, 2nd para: *(a different version, including a canary sheet handwritten text, attached to Page 24)*

"As the war drew to a close Ross learned that Ottawa rather than release Canadian forces who were on-stream in Canada, back to civilian life, had decided to farm them out at army rates of pay and under army discipline to corporations which were having difficulty maintaining a work force. It so happened that the Kent Regiment was the first to be put to the test, and Dowson set about to prepare them to resist this ominous anti-labor action of the King government.

"As the army detail continued to approach the job that they had been assigned to --raising and tarping the track on the Toronto Hamilton line-- Dowson tried to increase resistance -- which held -- only to collapse at the next stage. He approached the Toronto press in an attempt to get publicity, but the

reporters, some of whom expressed sympathy, were concerned their editors would not publish such a story in the midst of a war.

"Dowson, who held a membership in the High Park CCF, learned that CCF leader M.J. Coldwell would be addressing the annual party picnic (and) went to meet Coldwell to see what could be done. He expressed indignation that railway workers, the first union supporters of the CCF, would be challenged by the use of union-busting forced labor, and assured Ross that at the coming session of the House of Commons he would protest. He affirmed his intention in a letter a day or so later.

"When Dowson presented Coldwell's letter, articles appeared in the press. The next morning the captain in charge of the troops formed them up before marching down the tracks to denounce 'a disgruntled ex-officer in their ranks,' who may face the charge of mutiny. Dowson protested, and when on the job (site) was ordered to move 200 or 300 yards down the track from the rest of the detail. When given the official order he stated that he would not obey it, he was arrested, and two soldiers were instructed to parade him back to camp. As he passed by the rest of the regiment, everyone fell in behind him and when they arrived at the encampment they were all confined to barracks. This got considerable publicity and resulted in strikes by army and air-force men in similar circumstances throughout Ontario.

"The next day the King government met in cabinet to cancel the whole project, making them henceforth voluntary and at prevailing rates of pay.

"Upon returning to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Dowson applied for an educational discharge to go to university. But he never really did go -- he got involved in writing and the promotion (of) the paper *Labor Challenge."*

"--30— "

Further omissions from the Mintz published text:

(E) Page 42, 4th para: "The officer had hinted at a charge of mutiny but Ross knew he had broad support. The soldiers were being used as cheap labor under army discipline. The officer ordered guys to seize Ross under arrest. Ross called them to 'Come in behind me.' They marched in a body back to camp, triumphant.

"This is how Ross wrote up the situation in an early issue of *Labor Challenge* when the SWL was wondering if the RCMP would

be ordered to crack down on them.

(F) Page 43, 3rd para: "In October Ross was released from the army on an educational discharge to go to the University of Toronto. He used up his credits but he never made it. He commenced to help write and circulate the new Trotskyist paper *Labor Challenge.”*